

## Claims

We claim:

1. A device for retrieving stored data comprising:  
  
a processor for assigning at least one prioritized attribute to the data prior to storage; and  
  
a processor for retrieving said stored data, wherein said stored data is retrieved in an order determined by the priority of said at least one prioritized attribute assigned to said stored data.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein said stored data comprises an identifier, and said at least one prioritized attribute is encoded into said identifier.
3. The device of claim 1, wherein said stored data comprises a plurality of digital documents.
4. The device of claim 1, wherein said stored data is stored in a database.
5. The device of claim 1, wherein said stored data, said processor for assigning, and said processor for retrieving are connected by a network having a plurality of nodes.
6. The device of claim 5, wherein said stored data is distributed over said plurality of nodes of said network.
7. The device of claim 5, wherein said processor for assigning is distributed over said plurality of nodes of said network.
8. The device of claim 5, wherein said processor for retrieving is distributed over said plurality of nodes of said network.
9. A method for retrieving stored data comprising:

assigning at least one prioritized attribute to the data prior to storage; and

retrieving said stored data in an order determined by the priority of said at least one prioritized attribute assigned to said stored data.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said stored data comprises an identifier, and said at least one prioritized attribute is encoded into said identifier.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein said stored data comprises a plurality of digital documents.

12. The method of claim 9, further comprising storing said stored data in a database.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein said stored data is distributed over a plurality of network nodes.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein assigning at least one prioritized attribute is performed over a plurality of network nodes.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein retrieving said stored data is performed over a plurality of network nodes.

16. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for retrieving stored data, said method comprising:

assigning at least one prioritized attribute to the data prior to storage; and

retrieving said stored data in an order determined by the priority of said at least one prioritized attribute assigned to said stored data.

17. The program storage device of claim 16, wherein said stored data comprises an identifier, and said at least one prioritized attribute is encoded into said identifier.

18. The program storage device of claim 16, wherein said stored data is distributed over a plurality of network nodes.

- [illegible]